

Sermon Outline.

"ALONE WITH GOD." TEXT MATT. XIV. 23.

BY J. R. KELLER.

Jesus had left Nazareth, and taking ship on the sea of Galilee. He desires rest and privacy.

The multitudes on their way to the feast at Jerusalem,—overtakes them. They are not drawn to him for any spiritual benefits;—not seeking discipleship;—but on account of His miracles;—they also desire to make Him king, that they may gain their independence from the Roman Yoke. John vi, 15. They bring their sick, and are healed.

Evening is coming; a hungry multitude;—The Apostles are anxious about their meal;—Multitudes are after the loaves. The great sympathetic Christ never turns the hungry away empty. They are miraculously fed;—Christ sends the multitude away, and the disciples to the other side of the lake, while he retires to the mountain, to pray and was there alone. He goes for the silent hour.

Oh, the silent hour with God, what food to the soul.

Do you love it?—If not, you have not attained to one of the most pleasant experiences in the Christian life.

The soul needs it;—must have it. By this means it receives the heavenly manna as food to the soul. Matt. v, 6. From the example in our text we learn.

I. *That the holiest of lives, require periods of prayerful repose.*

Here is Christ the Mighty, who had become the wonder of the world, by the many miracles which he did, who could control the winds and waves, who takes gravitation in hand, and walks the surface of the deep;—yet preparing for further duties, he withdraws himself;—"Alone with God." That awful night in Gethsemane, with the sins of the world resting down upon him, he withdraws from his disciples and pours out his soul to God.

Holy men of old learned to love and enjoy it. Jacob wrestling with God. Gen. xxxii, 24-26.

The Psalmist loved to speak of his meditations and communings with God.

Ps. i, 2. "The delight of the godly is in the law of the Lord, and in his

law doth he meditate day and night."

By the words "Alone with God" we mean the hour of meditation;—of silent prayer;—and communion with God.

We are brought continually in contact with the material world, and the duties of life. These have a tendency to deaden or paralyze the finer sensibilities of our nature and bring poverty to the soul unless by these seasons of meditation and communion with the invisible God, they are quickened.

Man is controlled and acts in accordance with his environments. Place a godly man among wicked men, and wicked surroundings and associations the finer sensibilities of his nature become dull;—he partakes of the nature and character of his environments and surroundings. Reverse it;—place the sinner in the midst of godly surrounding, and the finer sensibilities will be quickened into life. Brother and sister; nothing furnishes so much wholesome, nor such rich food as is gained by being "Alone with God." Oh, how we love the associations of friends, and where is a friend who loves us above our Father in heaven;—it strengthens the soul; prepares us for the battles of life; and to resist satan. Satan never enters the secret chamber of prayer. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you; draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you." Christ says when thou prayest enter thy closet and shut the door "Ambrose" has said enter the closet of thy mind, wherever thou art, shut the door thereof against the world and commune with God."

Ungodly men don't enjoy these quiet moments of meditation,—taking a retrospective view of their lives, they cannot hold that sweet communion with their God. It places them in a strange room with strange company.

In withdrawing from the cares of the outside world, its noise and bustle we can examine our own hearts.

The Psalmist says "keep thy heart with all diligence." Oh, study your own hearts, and get acquainted with thine own self; search out the unguarded avenues, and place a sentinel there. In distress we go to friends for sympathy and unbosom our thoughts, God is your friend. The weak may come for strength, the coward for courage.

II. The busiest life can secure these seasons with God.

Christ's life was a busy one. Gather up these fragments of time as you allow them to idly pass by, and you will have plenty of time.

Is it possible men and women have not time to prepare for eternity? "Lord teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom". Oh, how thoughtless the great mass of human beings, rushing on to eternity; pressed by business and the pursuit of pleasures, with no quiet hour of devotion? How sad to see so many impoverished, starved souls, when there is "bread and to spare."

III. Our usefulness is increased by enjoying these periods of private devotion.

It prepares us to assist others. Getting these rich supplies of grace, we are better able to reach out after starving humanity.

Being filled with the spirit, and the love of God, we are able to carry the glad news to others. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? And your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Isaiah lv, 2.

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STARVATION.

Thousands of poor in New York and Brooklyn are suffering the most appalling destitution. They are freezing and starving. Families which heretofore have been in comfortable circumstances are destitute of everything, and strong men, who were never reduced to such straits before, are begging bread for their starving children. Gigantic charities have been organized to relieve the distress. The great New York dailies, particularly the World and Herald, are leading in this work. They are distributing bread and clothing in vast quantities. What a fearful condition of things this exhibits in the beginning of winter. What horrors will the tenement sections of those great cities witness during the coming months. How thankful ought we to be that our lot is cast in a better country, far removed from the hunger and squalor of the crowded metropolis.—[The Advocate, Buena Vista, Va.]

A child of God should be a visible Beatitude for joy and happiness, and a living Doxology for gratitude and adoration.—Spurgeon.